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Alleged distress of fishermen on the West Coast.

* 229-E Q.—Mr. A. B. SHETTY : Will the hon. the Minister for Education and Excise be pleased to state—

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the fact that the fishing season on the West Coast is very bad and that the fishermen are suffering from acute distress;

(b) whether the Government have under consideration any proposals to alleviate the distress; and

(c) whether the Government have called for a report from the Director of Fisheries on the matter?

A.—(a) & (b) No.

(c) A report has been called for.

Reduction in the issue price of salt.

* 229-F Q.—Mr. A. B. SHETTY : Will the hon. the Minister for Education and Excise be pleased to state what the decision of the Government is in regard to the reduction in the issue price of salt as recommended by the Fisheries Committee?

A.—The hon Member is referred to the answer to his question No. 229-A.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Police

Alleged lathi charge on a picnic party at Peddapuram.

230 Q.—Mr. C. SATYANARAYANA CHOUDARI : Will the hon. the Home Member be pleased to state—

(a) whether it is a fact that the police used a lathi charge against a picnic party on 21st December at Peddapuram, Godavari district;

(b) the circumstances under which this was done; and

(c) whether the Government have taken any action against those responsible for this?

A.—(a) & (b) The circumstances in which the police dispersed a gathering of Congress sympathisers at Peddapuram on 21st December 1930 were as follows :—

The Deputy Superintendent of Police, Cocanada, received information from the village authorities of Peddapuram that certain supporters of the civil disobedience movement had arranged to hold a meeting, under the guise of a picnic, in a garden in Peddapurkota village, just outside the area included in the orders under section 144, Criminal Procedure Code, at which the future plan of Congress action in the East Godavari district was to be discussed and the return from jail of certain Satyagraha volunteers of that district celebrated. On arriving at the place the Deputy Superintendent of Police found a gathering of over 150 persons, the majority of whom were listening to Mr. B. Satyanarayana, Secretary,

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District Congress Committee, reading aloud from a cyclostyled pamphlet (which has since been seized by the police) indicating the lines on which future Congress operations in the district would be carried out, namely, by the boycott of British goods and of census operations, by a no-tax campaign and by wilful damage to palm trees. The Deputy Superintendent of Police being satisfied that these persons had gathered there to conspire together to concert measures tending to obstruct the administration, declared the assembly to be an unlawful assembly and ordered it to disperse. Mr. Satyanarayana however continued reading from his pamphlet and the assembly showed no signs of dispersing. After waiting for some five minutes to see whether the order to disperse would be obeyed, the Deputy Superintendent of Police requested the ladies present to withdraw, and when they had done so, ordered the dispersal of the assembly by force.

(c) They have taken no action and do not propose to do so.

Alleged lathi charge on a picnic party at Peddapuram.

231 Q.—Mr. K. Kesava Ramamurti: Will the hon. the Home Member be pleased to state—

(a) whether there was a lathi charge against a picnic party at Peddapuram in December last;

(b) whether any order under section 144, Criminal Procedure Code, had been promulgated at Peddapuram;

(c) why the police had to interfere with the Dhanurmasam picnic party at Peddapuram when it was a purely social gathering of non-political nature;

(d) what the guests were engaged in when the police entered;

(e) whether it was a fact that as soon as the orders for dispersal were given by the Deputy Superintendent of Police, the guests were attacked with lathis without giving them even a moment's time to disperse;

(f) how many people were injured and what is the nature of their injuries;

(g) whether any ladies were beaten; and if so, how many and what was the nature of their injuries;

(h) whether the doctor who was asked to go to render medical aid to the injured was also beaten; and if so, what was the nature of his injuries;

(i) whether any unoccupied cars were damaged and if so, how many and what was the nature of the damages;

(j) whether the Government propose taking any action in the matter and if so, of what nature?

A.—(a), (c), (d) & (e) The hon. Member is referred to the answer to clauses (a) and (b) of question No. 230.

(b) No.

(f) The Government have no detailed information.

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(g) None of the ladies present was deliberately beaten, for at the request of the Deputy Superintendent of Police they withdrew before the order to disperse was given; but during the dispersal Miss P. Kameswaramma who tried to get into one of the cars accidently received on her arm a light blow aimed at somebody else. She admitted at the time that the blow was accidental.

(h) The hon. Member is referred to the answer to question No. 184-C.

(i) The hon. Member is referred to the answer to clause (1) of question No. 184-H.

(j) No.

[*Note.*—An asterisk (*) at the commencement of a speech indicates revision by the Member.]

II.—NON-OFFICIAL BUSINESS.

Bill.

A BILL TO AMEND THE MADRAS DISTRICT MUNICIPALITIES (AMENDMENT) ACT X OF 1930.

* Rai Sahib C. KOLANDA REDDI:—" Mr. President, Sir, I move for leave to introduce my Bill to amend the Madras District Municipalities (Amendment) Act X of 1930:

'*Whereas it is expedient further to amend the Madras District Municipalities (Amendment) Act X of* 1930 *for the reasons hereinafter stated, it is hereby enacted as follows*:

(1) *This Act may be called the Madras District Municipalities (Further Amendment) Act*, 1931.

(2) *In section 40A, delete sub-section* (c) (*b*), *and for sub-section* (c) (*a*) *read* " 4 ".'

" My object in introducing the above Bill is, Sir, that the provision that a chairman or vice-chairman shall be deemed to have vacated office when a motion expressing want of confidence is carried with the support of not less than two-thirds of the sanctioned strength of the council is sufficient to remove an unpopular chairman or vice-chairman from office. The provision contained in sub-section 4 (*b*) that the chairman or vice-chairman shall be deemed to have vacated office if two motions expressing want of confidence are carried with an interval of not less than a month even with a narrow majority of one among those present at the meeting is not conducive either to the efficiency or popularity of the municipal administration. In fact, it encourages disruption and creates an atmosphere of corruption. For this reason I request the leave of the House to introduce the Bill."

Mr. V. T. ARASU:—" I second the motion."

Sriman M. G. PATNAIK Mahasayo:—" I oppose the motion."

The hon. Diwan Bahadur B. MUNISWAMI NAYUDU:—"Mr. President, Sir, at this stage, I can only oppose the motion now before the House.